In our temples of religion it has fared no better: than in the pontifical church at Rome,

"To which Diana's marvel was a cell,"

there is, perhaps, in no building embodied a greater amount of ignorance or neglect of the principles of the style adopted. Conventionalism, in short, has been its bane: the architects did not build on ideas, nor withdraw their inspirations from nature, and we cannot expect the classic elements to assume artistic compositions under such circumstances,—from the hands of architects who bid, or sought to hide, by gorgeousness of decoration the want of art. I conceive of the revived Greek and Roman architecture as of a flower in its bud that has yet to blossom; of its beautiful elements, as links of music that will yet evolve

"Their grand consummate hymn."

SAMUEL HUGGINS.

PERILS OF HOLBORN-FOOT.

AMONGST the metropolitan improvements which have been carried out of late years, few can be said to have been otherwise than urgently called for; yet if these necessary had been taken in the order of their urgency, there is one which would, long ere now, have stood to our credit as a thing achieved; while perhaps one or two others might still have been, not shelved, but ordered to lie on the table, for the sake of its accomplishment: I refer to the long-desiderated viaduct across the valley of the Fleet.

The observant pedestrian, in passing down Holborn-hill, and approaching Farringdon-street, cannot fail to have his attention attracted to the difficult and perilous nature of the vehicle-traffic in the steep portions of this busy thoroughfare; indeed, his feelings of compassion for the poor horses are enough to suggest to his mind the necessity for some remedial measure being adopted: but to the outside passengers on omnibuses, or the occupants of open cabs, the scenes and experiences here must often be of a very alarming kind; while those who have the charge of heavily-loaded waggons are not to be envied for their difficult and onerous task: in some seasons especially, danger is most painfully apparent.

To many of the more modern inhabitants of London it may be unknown—although in looking at the locality with a geographical eye they would probably take it for granted—that underneath the hollow which lies between Holborn-hill and Snow-hill, a stream, rendered sluggish by its foul burden, runs, or perhaps rather *settles* (glacier fashion), to the Thames. This, now the great Fleet ditch, was formerly the Fleet river, and more anciently, the River of the Wells,—receiving, as it did, various limpid waters, as it meandered from its source in the high grounds at Hampstead-heath, by Kentish and Camden towns, St. Pancras old church, Battle-bridge, Bagniggewells, the House of Correction, to the hollow behind Mount Pleasant, Warner-street, and Saffron-hill, and so to the base of Holborn-hill, where it received the waters of the "Old Bourne," which, pent in its tunnel of brickwork, now constitutes Holborn sewer. After the Great Fire of 1666, improvements were made upon this river; and it presented a canal, crossed by four bridges—at Bridewell, Fleet-street, Fleet-lane, and Holborn, and which was navigable by barges, from the Thames up to Holborn-bridge,—having 5 feet of water at the lowest tides, and quays 30 feet broad on either side. Time was, when vessels had borne their freights much further up its stream; and an anchor has even, it is said, been found as far up as the vicinity of Battle-bridge. Its ultimate sphere of usefulness, however, fast grew upon it: in 1732, it was unanimously voted, in its uncovered condition, a nuisance; and by 1764 its course, even to its mouth, was arched over, and it was thenceforth dedicated altogether to Cloacina and Mephitis. Talk of the *Pons Asinorum!* it would be a puzzle rather to discover now either the bridges or the course of that once gurgling rivulet, on whose banks our aldermen's forefathers, who, in the time of William Rufus, were probably frugal swains, may have fed their flocks and herds; and as for its title of "Fleet," its claim to it is no longer appreciable in any sense of the term.

My subject having reference to supra-terranean operations rather than to such as I have just touched upon, these brief details will therefore suffice to convey an idea of the underground nature of the main portion of the site; and it need just be remarked here that, on viewing the locality transversely as regards the direction of the trunk line, it will be found that the street surface at Holborn-bridge has already been *raised* as much as it conveniently can be; and the summits at Hatton-garden and St. Sepulchre's tower are also *as low* as they well can be; so that nothing but a distinct line of roadway will effect the radical reform which is necessary to get rid of the excessive gradients with which vehicle traffic has to struggle between these two hills.

That some striking change is indispensable in the great main thoroughfare of Holborn and Newgate-street, between the two points just named, has forced itself on public attention for many years; and the following summary will show what propositions have been advanced for the cure of the evil complained of,—some of them highly approved:—

In 1828, Mr. T. F. Taylor proposed to carry an iron suspension-bridge from the corner of Hatton-garden to near the Saracen's Head Inn, in Skinner-street; the roadway of which was to be level, and of sufficient width to admit two carriages abreast; and the footpaths, and nearly all the houses, to be left undisturbed. (Estimated cost, 23,000*l.*)

In 1833, Mr. Turner proposed to construct a viaduct upon brick arches along the south side of Holborn-hill and Skinner-street, from Thavies' Inn to Seacole-lane; requiring the taking down all the houses on that side from Shoe-lane to Farringdon-street, while others of more modern date were to be raised: the arches of the viaduct to be made available for warehouses opening from that portion of the line which retained its original levels, or rather acclivities. By a subsequent modification of the plan, the street was to be increased to 70 feet wide, the viaduct being 35.

In the same year, Mr. Moseley proposed to raise the ground at Holborn-bridge 12 feet rendering necessary the alteration of houses at the bottom of the hill.

In 1836, Messrs. Barnard and Geary proposed to construct a viaduct on the north side from Hatton-garden to the upper end of Snow-hill, requiring the removal of the greater portion of the buildings between these two points. (Estimated cost, 350,000*l.*)

In 1838, in the Metropolitan Improvement Committee's Second Report, appeared a proposition by Mr. Pococke, for a viaduct on the south side, from St. Andrew's-court to Seacole-lane.

In 1840, Mr. Moseley proposed in addition to his scheme of 1833, to lower the summit of Holborn-hill 16, and that of Snow-hill 12 inches, so as to reduce the gradients to 1 in 35.

In 1841, Mr. Galloway proposed to erect centrally in the line of road, a viaduct 30 feet wide upon iron arches, for horses and carriages only, from Hatton-garden to the Saracen's-head inn; the street to remain below, but widened where requisite.

In the same year, Mr. Moon proposed a plan nearly similar to that of Mr. Turner, only insisting on a greater width of road.

[Of the merits of Mr. Stead's registered project, referred to in letter and leader of THE BUILDER, vol. 4, p. 541, and also at p. 586, further than that it is a viaduct (estimated cost 170,000*l.*), and supposes a toll of a halfpenny on pedestrians and equestrians using it, a penny on omnibuses, cabs, chaises, chariots, and taxed-carts, and three-halfpence on carts and waggons, I am unaware.]

The above are independent of various propositions in 1833-5, &c., for making new streets or viaducts, distinct from, and not being improvements on the Holborn and Skinner-street line, but in lieu of such. These would seem to view the proper dealing with the present line without interfering with the property along its sides (excepting that they would have destroyed its value) as being impracticable. Both Mr. Taylor and Mr. Galloway, however, have indicated that the case can be dealt with without being open to material objection on that score; and I think the former only erred in proposing to adopt the suspension principle upon a curved line of way, and the latter in contemplating too great a width.

The width between the houses being say 50 feet, at the narrowest part,—the roadway between curbs being 30 feet, and footpaths 10 feet each, if the viaduct were made the whole width of present roadway, in accordance with Mr. Galloway's plan, it would not only come into offensive proximity to the houses on either side, but difficulty would be created at the terminations, in obtaining passage for the cross traffic into and out of the streets of the lower level; for the height of the required viaduct being at Farringdon-street about 30 feet, and a narrow one being desirable, it becomes obvious that its use must be confined to the eastward and westward traffic, which at the present time seems to be quite nine-tenths of the whole that takes place at this confluence: and therefore there must be preserved or formed at the ends of the high-level way, sufficient passage for such portion of the low level traffic as does not merely cross underneath the viaduct, but passes up or down alongside of it, either in its eastern or western end: were a viaduct erected the full width of the present roadway, this passage at the ends would have to be accomplished by means of something like a circus at each,—requiring the purchase, sacrifice, and rebuilding of property.

Any plan for raising the line of street bodily, and the houses along its sides with it, although perfectly practicable, must involve so serious a cost as to form a hopeless barrier to its accomplishment; and any plan to raise but one-half of its width, whether along the north or along the south side, leaving the other half to still dive down with its present steep incline, would, I conceive, be unsatisfactory,—the low line being mean by reason of its narrowness, even if shops instead of warehouses occupied the brick arches which supported the high one; and when it is proposed to increase the total width of the street above to 70 feet, in order to afford to this low line passage for two lines of vehicles, what between the cost and the sacrifice, a *total* raising becomes equally feasible, while it would be more consonant to the taste of the age. To those who are acquainted with the city of Edinburgh, such a thing as two streets crossing each other at levels differing much more than would be the case here, is easily understood; as well as the appearance of the houses at the intersection, which are double the usual height: the main difficulty to the working is the obtaining passages parallel with the high level for vehicles from the low one to reach it by.

The central viaduct scheme, for vehicles only, is evidently by far the most tangible,—not a suspension one, where ample support can be conveniently obtained throughout its length from below, and where, supposing it were desirable, it would have to be in several spans, in consequence of the curvature; nor yet one the full width of the roadway, to bring omnibus outsiders staring into people's one-pair and two-pair floor windows, and rendering the low-level vehicle traffic difficult and dangerous; but a narrow one, so as to facilitate the latter, and sustained by direct support.

Such a viaduct, formed solely for the great eastward and westward traffic, should be laid with two pairs of tramways; one pair for the line of vehicles running east, the other for those running west,—the central space narrower than those gauged for vehicles, or otherwise disqualified for use: its width need not exceed 19 feet between the railings: these should be lofty, if not necessarily for security, at least to give the fullest feeling of it to timid passengers. The lines of support below should be so near to each other, say 11 feet from centre to centre, as to divide the 30-feet roadway into three nearly equal parts, and leave good gangways for vehicles between them and the footpaths.

For the construction of such a viaduct,

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